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SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PREPARATION OF PLANS
FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE FIFTEENTH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION
OF HUMAN RIGHTS

PLANS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Secretary-General has received the following statement from the Permanent Representative of Ceylon to the United Nations, and has the honour to transmit it, as requested, to the Committee:

Fifteenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

"The delegation of Ceylon regards the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a unique opportunity to make a historic contribution to the evolution of human rights in our time.

Throughout the life of the United Nations, the question of human rights has been, by and large, a rather academic one. The fact that we are still talking about "The Declaration" and that the covenants are still in the drafting stage, is an indication of the rather disappointing tempo of progress in this field. A world in motion - indeed, in a revolutionary state of dynamic changes - can no longer be satisfied with mere "Declarations". The peoples of the world, everywhere, are looking for implementation of the rights we have enunciated in the various organs of the United Nations Organization.

Not only in the colonies and in the new States, but even in the most advanced countries, the rising tide is for action and concrete achievement. When these demands are frustrated, we begin to hear the rising and recurrent slogan that in this field the United Nations is only "a talking organization".

I do not mean to imply that there has been no implementation. Sometimes I think that there has been much of it, despite, rather than because of, the many

statements and resolutions issued in this field in the United Nations and its agencies. For instance, ILO and UNESCO have produced some interesting and promising results in draft and adopted conventions in this field. Only last week the Ceylon delegation received a UNESCO report to the Human Rights Commission on the convention now in force for the protection of human rights in the field of education. What was most interesting to me in the report is the draft protocol, unanimously adopted by the UNESCO Conference for the implementation of this convention.

There are many such conventions which contain one or another provision for implementation. On the other hand, there are many more which are no more than a grade above the Declaration species.

Actually, I believe we have virtually exhausted the academic formulations and Declarations. The urge and the impulse in the world is now for enforcement. Take, for example, the Declaration on Colonialism. It was hardly one year old before the Assembly set up the Committee of Seventeen - now twenty-four - to do something about the Declaration, and I need hardly speak of the satisfactory results already achieved.

My point is that we should make this celebration not only a paean of praise to the past, but, much more, a keynote to the future. The celebration, I would like to urge, should be a bold, dynamic thrust into the future. And just as we have given lagging economic progress a great forward spurt with the theme of the Decade of Development, we might, taking a lesson from this, celebrate the occasion by launching 'A Decade of Implementation of Human Rights'."